



Further Developments in Improved Sensitivity, Low-cost Uncooled IR Detector Focal Plane Arrays

**by Wendy L. Sarney, John W. Little, Kimberley A. Olver,
Frank E. Livingston, Krisztian Niesz, and Daniel E. Morse**

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Further Developments in Improved Sensitivity, Low-cost Uncooled IR Detector Focal Plane Arrays

Wendy L. Sarney, John W. Little, and Kimberley A. Olver
Sensors and Electron Devices Directorate, ARL

Frank E. Livingston
The Aerospace Corporation

Krisztian Niesz and Daniel E. Morse
Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies,
University of California, Santa Barbara

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14. ABSTRACT The program goals for year 2-quarter 1 (Y2Q1) Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies project 'Lower Cost Uncooled IR Detector Focal Plane Arrays' included (1) the continued expansion of our barium titanium oxide (BaTiO ₃) nanomaterial synthesis capabilities and deposition methods, (2) laser-induced pyroelectric phase conversion studies and spectroscopic end-point control scheme, and (3) comprehensive material characterization studies, along with electrical property characterization of BaTiO ₃ thin films. This report covers progress that took place in the three month period from May 1, 2009–July 30, 2009.					
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1. Introduction

The program goals for year 2-quarter 1 (Y2Q1) corresponded to the continued expansion of our barium titanium oxide (BaTiO_3) nanomaterial synthesis capabilities and deposition methods, laser-induced pyroelectric phase conversion studies and spectroscopic end-point control scheme, and comprehensive material characterization studies, along with electrical property characterization of BaTiO_3 thin films. This work took place in the three month period from May 1, 2009–July 30, 2009. The project schedule for year 2 is summarized in figure 1.

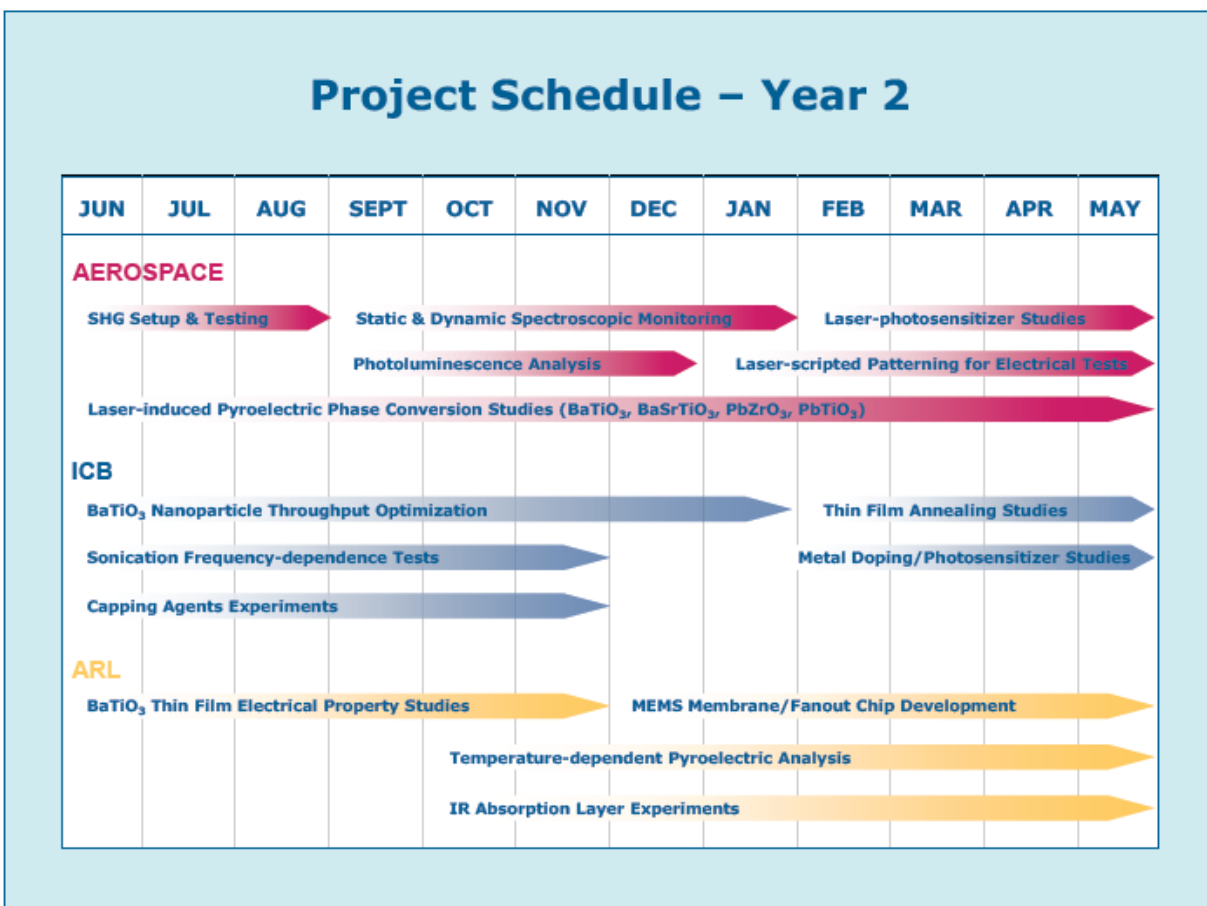


Figure 1. Project schedule.

Respective team highlights are listed in table 1.

Table 1. Highlights of Y2Q1 progress.

<i>Aerospace</i>	Continued investigations into the laser-induced pyroelectric cubic-tetragonal phase conversion of functionalized BaTiO ₃ nanoparticle thin films at multiple UV wavelengths, including <i>laser-scripted</i> modulation at $\lambda=355$ nm and <i>intensity</i> modulation $\lambda=266$ nm. Efforts also focused on the development and implementation of a new dual-beam second harmonic generation (SHG) setup that permits phase conversion analysis during both static laser exposures and laser raster patterning. We expanded the capabilities of the spectroscopic detection scheme to include the ability to measure time-resolved photoluminescence during laser patterning—a distinct emission peak was observed for native BaTiO ₃ thin films, which may prove to be a valuable direct marker for phase conversion.
<i>ICB</i>	Designed and built a continuous flow reactor to increase the throughput of BaTiO ₃ synthesis. The experimental setup uses MHz frequency sonication to induce evaporation of precursor molecules in the solution, forming micro-droplets in a state of a fine mist. We are aiming to use the increased reactivity of small droplets for improved film quality and increased particle production. Experiments have been carried out to deposit films, with different thicknesses, consisting of organic acid functionalized BaTiO ₃ nanoparticles on PtTi/Si substrates using spin coating and drop casting.
<i>ARL</i>	Achieved integration of electrical contacts into BaTiO ₃ thin film structures that are a requisite for measuring critical electrical properties of the perovskite thin films, including infrared (IR) responsiveness, capacitance, and resistance, which involved evaporative deposition of TiPt and Au contacts, along with wire bonding on selective contact locations. Deposition of electrical contacts was accomplished without delamination or structural disruption of the underlying BaTiO ₃ thin film. All project teams have accomplished their respective planned milestones for Y2Q1, and highlights of the major activities are provided in the following sections.

2. Progress by the Aerospace Corporation (Aerospace)

2.1 Laser-induced Photoemission Analysis of BaTiO₃ Thin Films

Our first quarter efforts for year 2 have focused on the continued development and implementation of a spectroscopic detection scheme for end-point analysis of the laser-induced pyroelectric activation and phase conversion process, where we have now investigated *photoluminescence* phenomena during intense laser irradiation as a potential marker for phase conversion. In year 1-quarter 3 (Y1Q3), we designed the optical configuration and initiated the development of an *in situ* pump-probe SHG spectroscopic detection scheme for dynamic, real-time monitoring of the pyroelectric phase conversion during laser patterning. The intent is to use the SHG activity associated with the non-centrosymmetric tetragonal polymorph to assess the extent of phase conversion from the SHG-inactive centrosymmetric cubic polymorph. In year 1-quarter 4 (Y1Q4), we expanded upon our prior efforts and designed a dual-beam experimental setup that permits the simultaneous delivery of the ultraviolet (UV) laser processing beam and IR SHG pump-beam to a substrate under dynamic patterning conditions and static exposure

conditions; these modifications will help facilitate laser pulse script optimization and refinement, along with improving process and quality control.

For the preliminary photoemission studies, we qualitatively examined the direct luminescence behavior of barium titanate thin films that were laser-irradiated at $\lambda=266$ nm under ambient temperature and pressure conditions. Figure 2 presents several photographic images that were acquired during the static laser irradiation experiments. Figure 2(a) shows the as-received cubic BaTiO₃/quartz sample (sample #3, 3×20 μ l spin coat, substrate lot # Apr. 2009) prior to laser exposure. The BaTiO₃/quartz sample was approximately 10 mm \times 10 mm and was mounted on a manual micro-XY stage assembly for sample translation and alignment. The photograph shown in figure 2(b) was captured while irradiating the BaTiO₃ thin film at $\lambda=266$ nm, where the laser repetition rate was 5.0 kHz, the pulse duration was $\tau=520$ fs, and the incident per-pulse fluence was ca. $7.6 \text{ mJ}\cdot\text{cm}^{-2}$. To our surprise, the cubic phase BaTiO₃ thin film exhibited an intense red emission that was clearly visible to the naked eye and did not qualitatively appear to diminish with laser exposures extending to several minutes and exceeding 10^6 pulses.

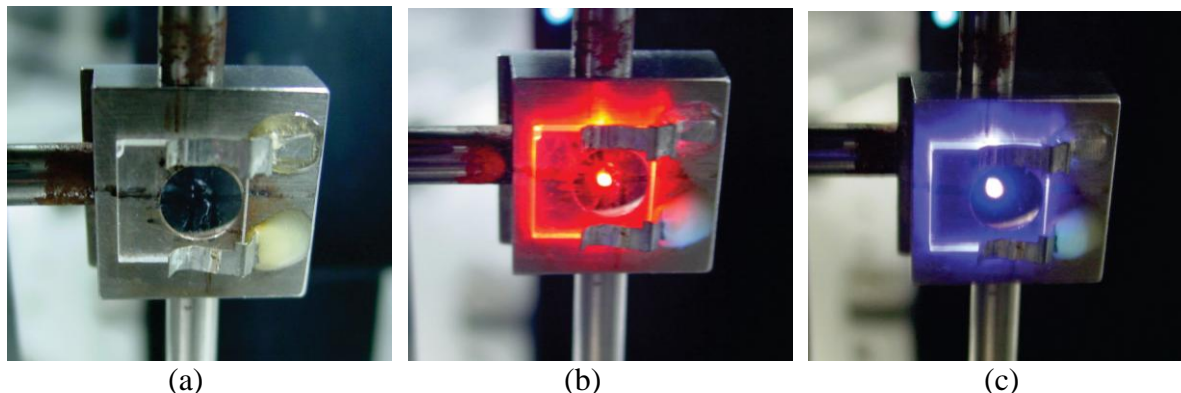


Figure 2. Photographs that were acquired for the static laser exposure experiments at $\lambda=266$ nm and correspond to a BaTiO₃/quartz sample (a) prior to laser irradiation and (b) during laser irradiation, and a quartz sample (c) during laser irradiation.

To examine whether the laser-induced photoluminescence was influenced by the underlying substrate, we also conducted laser irradiation experiments on blank quartz coupons. Figure 2(c) displays the photographic image that was acquired during laser irradiation of a quartz substrate under the same exposure conditions that were used in figure 2(b). In the absence of a BaTiO₃ thin film overlayer, the intense red emission was not observed, instead replaced by a strong blue emission. Clearly, the origin and behavior of the laser-induced photoluminescence phenomenon are quite different for the BaTiO₃/quartz sample and the quartz reference sample.

Quantitative photoemission analyses were performed by monitoring the laser-induced photoluminescence signal using an ultra-fast gated charge-coupled device (CCD) detector coupled to an Acton 300i high resolution spectrometer. Figure 3 shows the laser-induced photoluminescence results for a quartz reference sample under the same experimental conditions that were employed for the static exposure results shown in figure 2. Two discrete, intense

spectral features appear during laser irradiation at $\lambda=266$ nm, with their peaks centered at 408 nm and 532 nm, respectively. A broad, weak, and essentially featureless band also appears and is centered at approximately 650 nm. The narrow intense peak at 532 nm (bandwidth at FWHM $\Delta\lambda=6$ nm) does not correspond to direct photoemission, but rather relates to a first-order ($2\lambda=532$ nm) reflection of the incident laser light from the diffraction grating inside the spectrometer. The prominent photoluminescence feature at 408 nm (bandwidth at FWHM $\Delta\lambda=48$ nm) corresponds to the blue light emission that was observed in figure 2, and is generally attributed to the existence of intrinsic oxygen-deficient centers (ODCs) in fused silica, which emit blue light under intense UV laser irradiation. The broad photoluminescence feature centered at ~ 650 nm is related to nonbridging oxygen hole centers (NBOHCs), which have been linked to plastic deformation and cracking of the glass network (1).

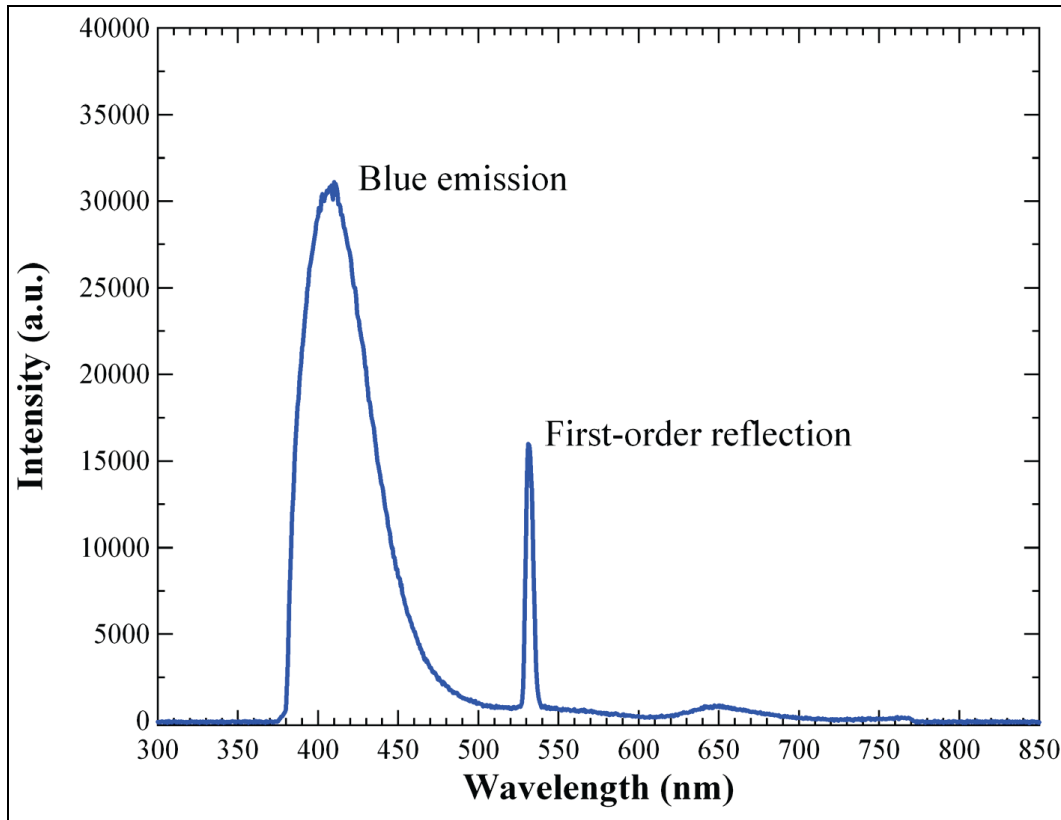


Figure 3. Photoluminescence spectrum acquired during laser irradiation ($\lambda=266$ nm) of a quartz reference sample.

Figure 4 displays the photoluminescence spectrum that was measured for the BaTiO₃/quartz sample (see figure 2) at $\lambda=266$ nm, where the per-pulse laser fluence was $8.0 \text{ mJ} \cdot \text{cm}^{-2}$. The laser-induced photoluminescence results reveal several important characteristics. First, the intense blue emission observed at 408 nm for the quartz substrate has been completely suppressed and is no longer detectable. Second, the first-order reflection of the incident laser light is again observed at $\lambda=532$ nm. Most important, however, is the appearance of a new distinct, intense

photoluminescence peak at 650 nm with a relatively narrow bandwidth of $\Delta\lambda=44$ nm at FWHM. This prominent photoluminescence peak is responsible for the intense red light that was detected visually (figure 2(b)), and may prove to be a valuable *direct in situ* marker for the structural phase of BaTiO₃. Previous photoemission studies on bulk perovskites have suggested that the origin of the photoluminescence may be related to perturbations to the fundamental octahedron unit cell, which are caused by charge transfer processes via intrinsic defects, such as oxygen vacancies, surface states, OH-defects, and non-centrosymmetric Ti³⁺ ions (2).

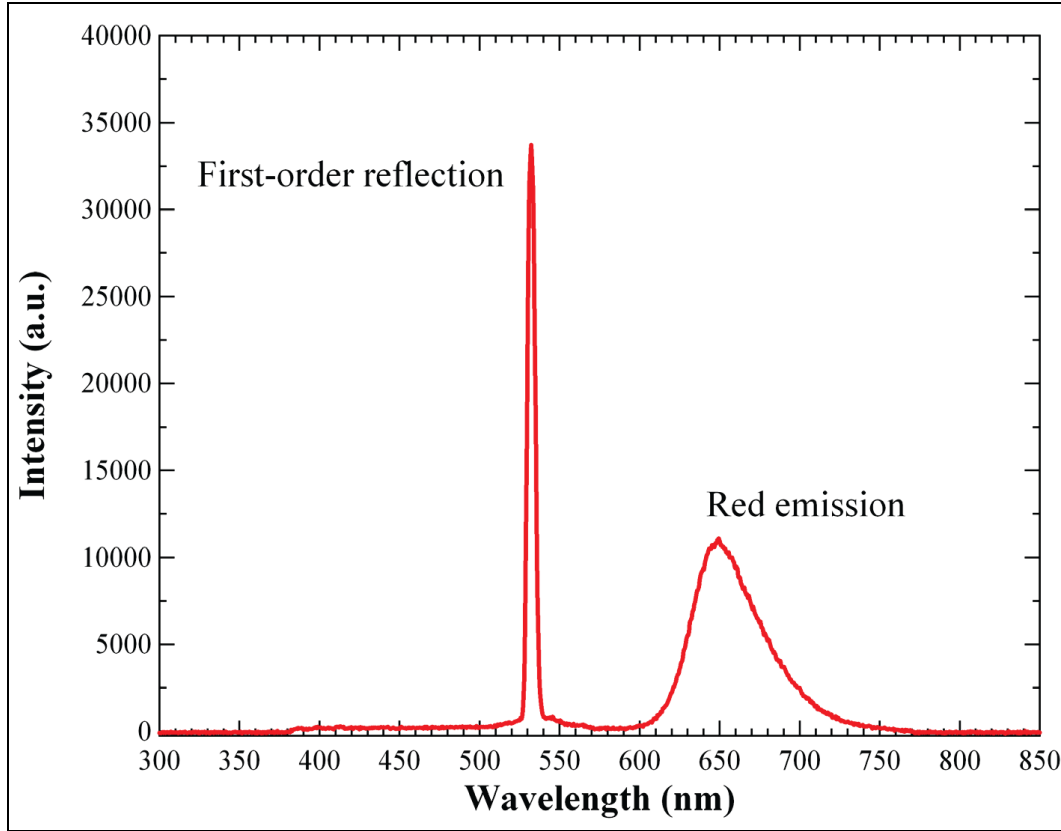


Figure 4. Photoluminescence spectrum acquired during laser irradiation ($\lambda=266$ nm) of a BaTiO₃ thin film deposited on a quartz substrate.

We have also investigated the fluence dependence of the 650 nm photoemission feature to assess whether the laser-induced photoluminescence is a single photon or multiple photon process. Figure 5 shows the measured photoluminescence intensity versus wavelength at incident laser fluences that ranged from $F=1.5 \times 10^{-2} \text{ mJ} \cdot \text{cm}^{-2}$ to $F=5.2 \text{ mJ} \cdot \text{cm}^{-2}$. The emission results indicate that the 650 nm photoluminescence intensity increases with incident laser fluence, while the peak maximum location remains unchanged over the range of fluencies studied. The inset in figure 5 displays the integrated peak areas for the 650 nm feature versus incident laser fluence. A third-order polynomial fit is provided as a visual guide, and the multiple photon dependence is consistent with a non-linear excitation process via intense ultra-fast pulse laser irradiation of the BaTiO₃ thin film.

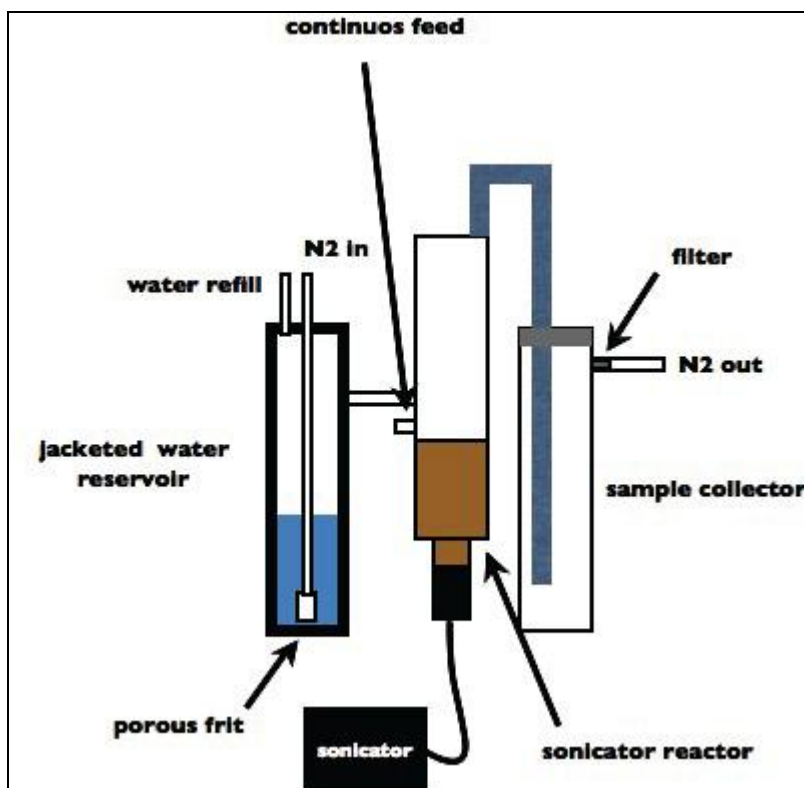


Figure 5. Schematic of the reactor setup for continuous production of BaTiO₃ nanoparticles by sonication-induced evaporation.

In the next quarter, we will investigate the photoluminescent properties of BaTiO₃ thin film samples that have undergone controlled thermal treatment via conventional furnace heating and laser-scripted processing at multiple UV wavelengths. Our aim is to determine if thermal processing and cubic-tetragonal phase conversion produce photoemission features that are in marked contrast to the as-received native BaTiO₃ samples. If successful, this photoluminescence approach will simplify the *in situ* detection of the pyroelectric phase transformation since an additional pump-beam (IR SHG) is not required for second harmonic generation; in this new scenario, the UV laser processing beam would be responsible for inducing the structural phase change, as well as promoting photoluminescence.

3. Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies (ICB)

3.1 Continuous Flow Reactor by Sonication Induced Vaporization

The experimental setup (figure 6) consists of three individual and well-separated glass parts. The first part is a dual-jacketed reactor filled with diluted hydrochloric acid (0.75 M), which will provide the reaction with the catalyst vapor by bubbling inert gas through it. The catalyst vapor meets with the alkoxide precursor in the 2nd chamber, where the single source BaTi double

metal alkoxide is vaporized by a sonicator operated at 1.6 MHz frequency to form a fine mist containing micron-sized droplets. From this point, the mixed vapor (catalyst/alkoxide) is driven into the third vessel, which is the sample collector, by the inert gas flow. The system is currently under testing.

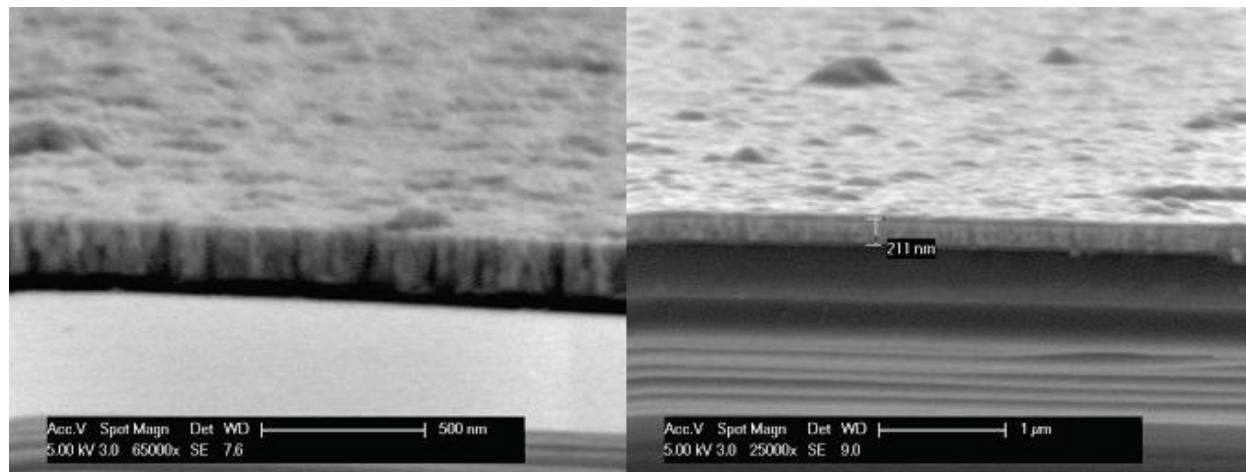


Figure 6. SEM images of BaTiO₃ films featuring 210 nm thickness prepared by spin coating.

We believe that this combination of sonication induced vaporization and the original idea of low-temperature vapor diffusion catalysis offers several advantages, which will help us to move towards continuous production of valuable materials, such as the BaTiO₃ nanoparticles. These advantages include the following:

1. MHz frequency sonication produces small droplets, including the alkoxide pool, with high specific surface area.
2. The flow rate of the carrier inert gas is tunable, and if chosen appropriately, it could provide enough time to facilitate the mixing and the reaction of the basic ingredients before reaching the collector vial and the gas outlet.
3. The throughput of the synthesis method highly depends on, among other factors, the maximum of the vaporization rate of the transducer, which is given as 10 mL/min with water.

3.2 Preparation of BaTiO₃ Films for Studying Laser-induced Site-selective Transformation

BaTiO₃ thin films featuring different thicknesses were deposited on platinum titanium (PtTi)/silicon (Si) substrates and sent to Aerospace for laser-induced site-selective transformation experiments. Our aim was to produce a series of samples featuring thickness in the range of a few hundred nanometers up to few microns. The samples were prepared by spin coating and drop casting the surface functionalized BaTiO₃ particles from hexane solution. During the spin coating experiments, the spinning speed and the ramp rate were varied between 1,500–6,000 RPM and 200–1000 RPM/s, respectively. Spin coating using 6,000 RPM for 30 s and

1,000 RPM/s ramp rate, resulting in a uniform film with around 210 nm thickness (figure 7); this thickness was identified as best to form good quality films reproducibly and consistently.

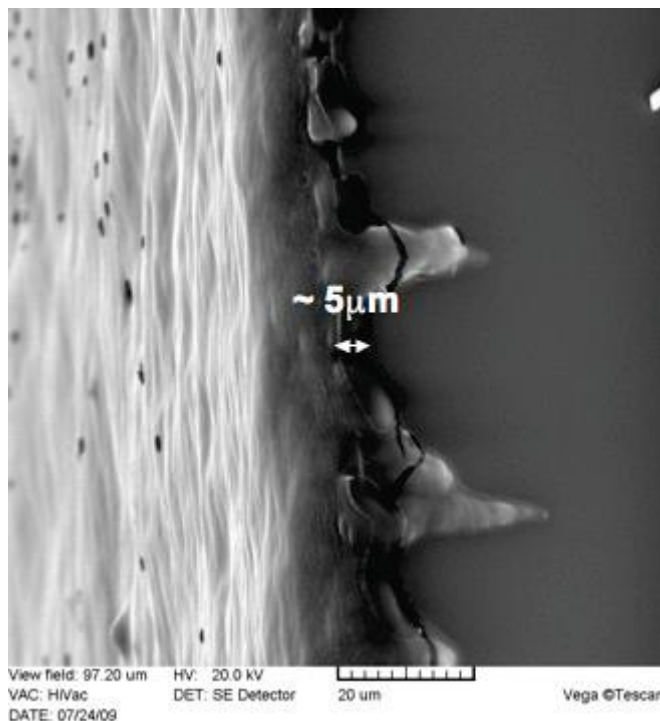


Figure 7. SEM image of BaTiO₃ films featuring 5 μm thickness prepared by drop casting.

We observed a more than 50% increment in thickness from around 210 nm to 350 nm when the spinning speed was decreased from 6,000 RPM to 1,500 RPM. However, the film prepared at lower spinning speed was also characterized with larger surface roughness and, therefore, undesired film morphology.

Subsequent deposition of BaTiO₃ nanoparticles by spin coating at 6,000 RPM resulted in only doubling the film thickness (210 nm–450 nm) after 10 cycles, but the surface morphology did not change significantly this time.

The most reliable way to produce relatively smooth films with thickness in the micrometer range was through drop casting 20 μL of the mother BaTiO₃/hexane suspension, followed by drying carried out at 50 °C (figure 8).

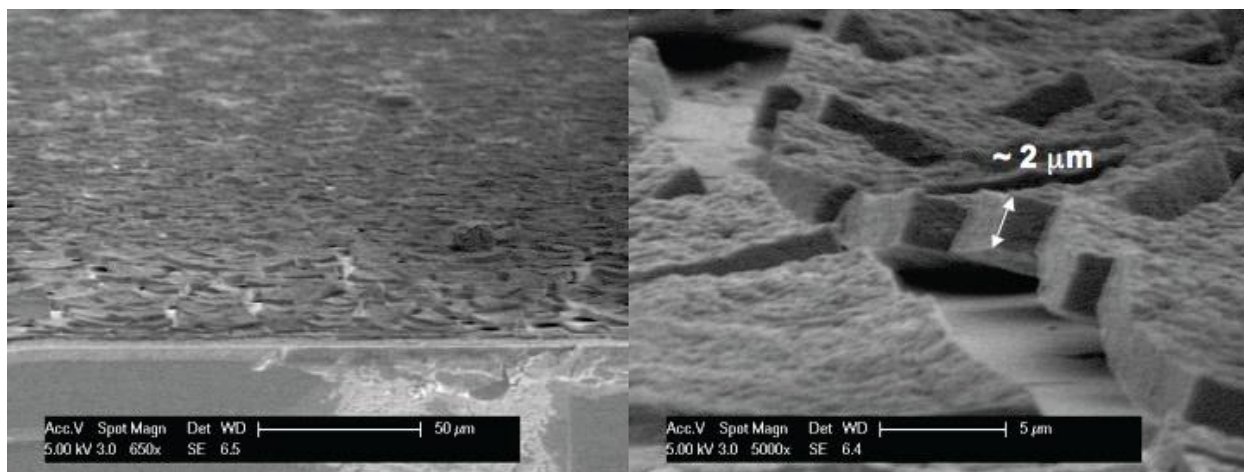


Figure 8. SEM images of BaTiO₃ films featuring 2 μm thickness prepared by drop casting and subsequent annealing at 300 °C.

In order to make the films more compact, and to remove the embedded hexane and—at least partially—the hydrocarbon residue from the organic capping, an annealing process at 300 °C was carried out. Although the annealing attempts resulted in significant compression of the film (figure 9) from 5 μm to around 2 μm in thickness, an intensive cracking through the film was also observed.



Figure 9. BaTiO₃/TiPt/Si multilayer structure.

From our results based on the experiments with different depositions techniques, we can conclude that spin coating at high spinning speed and using high ramp rate is necessary to produce good quality thin films. However the fabrication of robust, thicker films with satisfying surface roughness and morphology still remains a challenging task for the future.

3.3 Future Tasks

Continuous synthesis process:

1. Carry out experiments to test the capability of the system to produce well-defined BaTiO₃ nanoparticles.
2. Determine the maximum throughput of the system.
3. Investigate the sonication frequency dependency of the final product morphology by other tunable transducers in the 550 kHz–1.6 MHz frequency range.

4. Explore the effects of including capping agents during BaTiO₃ nanoparticle synthesis to achieve even better dispersion of the particles in films, more uniform packing, and stronger adhesion.

Film deposition:

5. Investigate the annealing process to produce thick and dense BaTiO₃ films, while preserving process continuity.
6. Study the possibility of using larger wafers for depositions.
7. Carry out fundamental investigations of fabricating lead zirconate (PbZrO₃) (PZ)-, lead titanate (PbTiO₃) (PT)-, and Pb(Ti,Zr)O₃ (PZT)-contained thin films for optimizing the pyroelectric perovskite layer in the IR detector.

4. Progress by the Army Research Laboratory (ARL)

4.1 Preparation for Electrical Characterization Measurements

The quality of the BaTiO₃ films provided by the ICB has improved to the point that we could begin electrical characterization. We supplied the ICB with Si wafers with an evaporated layer of TiPt on the surface. The TiPt serves as the bottom electrical contact and also improves the cohesion of the BaTiO₃ to the substrate. ICB deposited BaTiO₃ layers of varying thicknesses onto several substrates (figure 10) and sent the samples back to ARL.

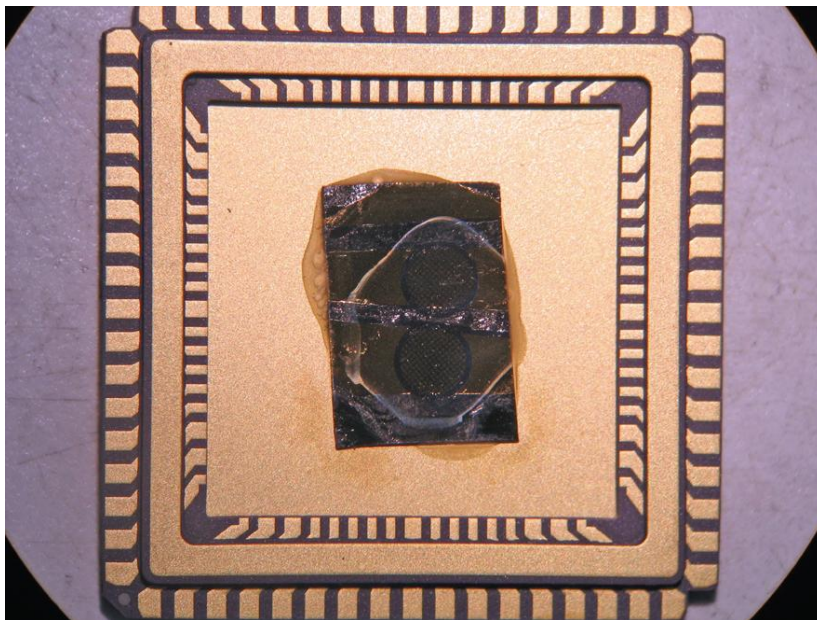


Figure 10. BaTiO₃ thin film following the application of a top electrical contact.

We then applied a top electrical contact to the BaTiO₃ film, as shown in figure 11. The top contact had to be patterned (there should be small areas of material with a deposited metallic layer surrounded by material with a “bare” surface). We used a 3 mm transmission electron microscope (TEM) copper grid with 100-micron holes as a mask. Two grids were taped onto the film with Kapton tape. Tape was also placed at the ends of the sample. The sample was then placed into the evaporator and a 250 Å chromium (Cr) adhesion layer was deposited, followed by a 2500 Å gold (Au) contact layer. The Kapton tape and the grids were removed, thus exposing the film and leaving behind a pattern of top contacts (figure 11). In the four corners of the sample, the film was removed to expose the bottom TiPt contact. The images show that the sample is mounted onto a 68-pin leadless chip carrier (LCC). This is a type of packaging for integrated circuits, and is standard for packaging focal plane arrays (FPAs).

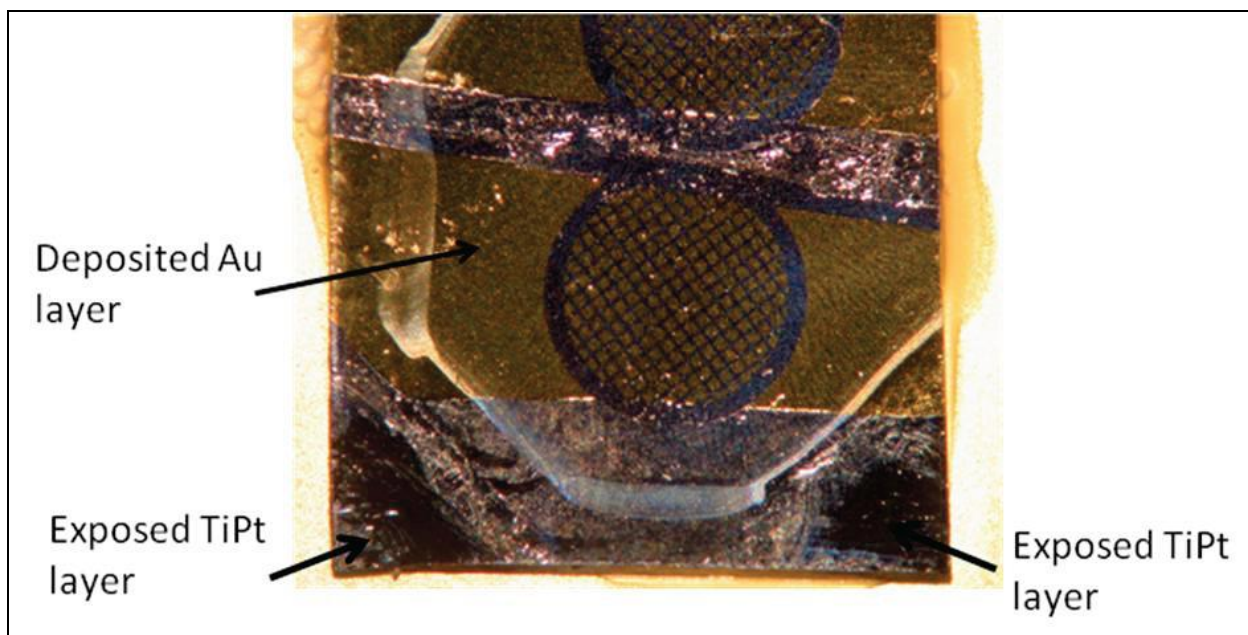


Figure 11. Close-up view of the BaTiO₃ thin film showing the top electrical contact grid pattern.

The next step was to wire bond some of the square Au regions and the four exposed TiPt regions, so that we could measure properties such as capacitance and resistance. A wire-bonded BaTiO₃ film is shown in figure 12. The film stood up to the process. A common failure mode would be for the film to lift off during the bonding process, or for the bond to not “stick.” The BaTiO₃ film is in its as-grown cubic polycrystalline phase. After making baseline measurements with this film, we will induce the phase transformation to the pyroelectrically active tetragonal phase. If the film is pyroelectrically active, it will have a temperature-dependent capacitance. We will test BaTiO₃ that has undergone phase transformation via the laser processing method in the same manner.

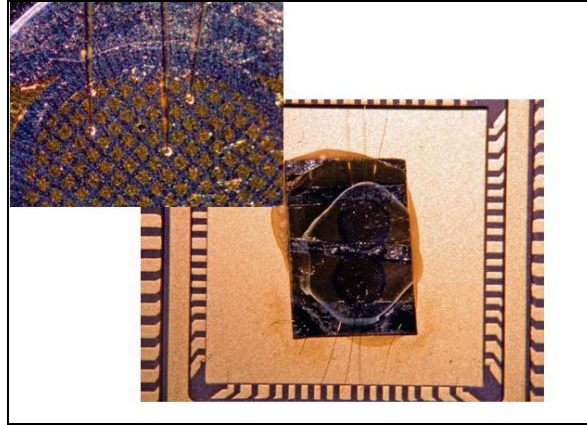


Figure 12. BaTiO₃ thin film following the application of wire bonds.

4.2 IR Absorption Layer Research

In this quarter, we also began planning for the IR absorption layer that will need to go on top of the structure. For our thermal detector project, we need a layer similar to a thin coating of black paint that absorbs a wide range of wavelengths and heats up. The heat is transferred to the BaTiO₃ layer, and a pyroelectric voltage is generated. A candidate that is compatible with some of the MEMS processing, and will be required for the actual detectors, is a thin layer of black Si. We have developed a technique (figure 13) that uses metal nanoparticles and dry etching to generate the nanopillars in the Si surface that traps light of a wide range of wavelengths (independent of the bandgap of the Si), most of which will be absorbed by free electrons and turned into heat.

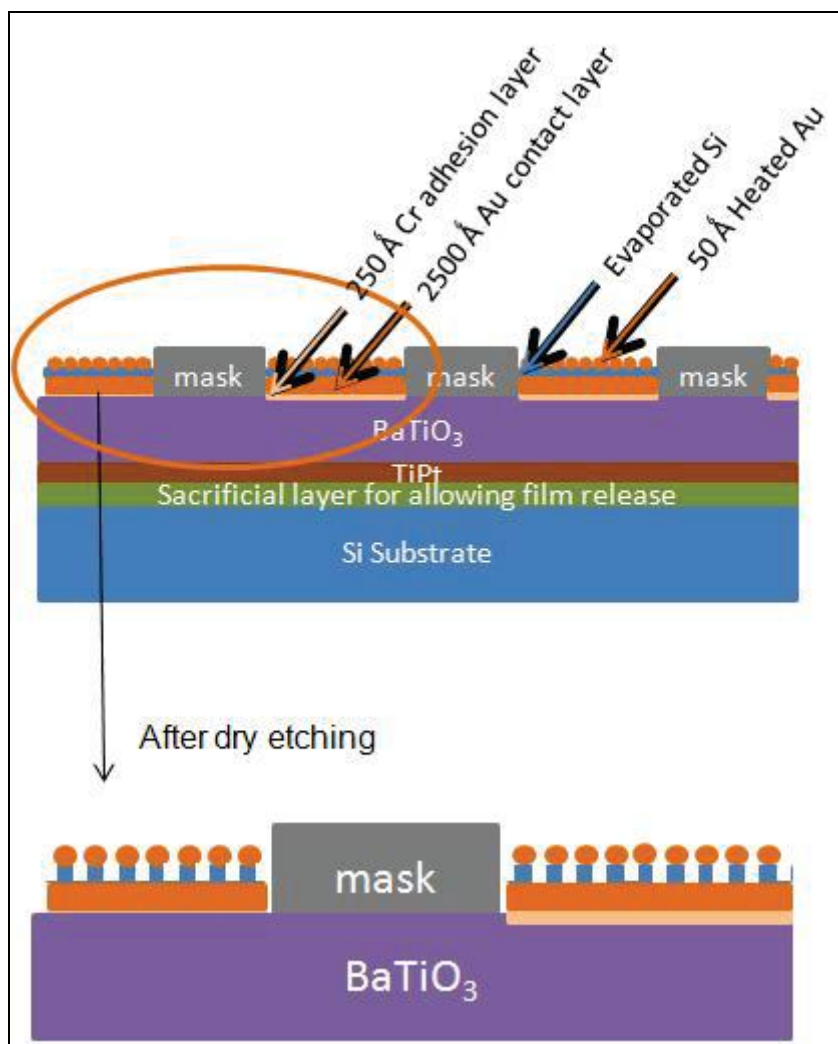


Figure 13. Dry etch approach to the fabrication of black silicon nanopillars for enhanced IR absorption.

5. Plans and Goals for Year 2 Quarter 2

In the coming quarter, we will continue to expand our nanomaterial synthesis capabilities, laser processing techniques and spectroscopic phase conversion studies, and perovskite thin film electrical characterization efforts. We also intend to initiate and pursue several new areas of focus. ICB will explore the effects of including capping agents during BaTiO₃ synthesis to further enhance particle dispersion, and perform fundamental investigations of fabricating lead oxide thin films (e.g., PbZrO₃ and PbTiO₃) for optimizing the pyroelectric perovskite layer in the IR detector. Aerospace will conduct photoluminescence studies on UV laser-processed and furnace-treated BaTiO₃ thin films to explore the possible existence of a direct optical marker for pyroelectric phase transformation control; it will also expand our laser scripted processing

studies to include other nanostructured thin films that are important for uncooled IR detector technologies, such as $\text{Ba}_x\text{Sr}_{1-x}\text{TiO}_3$ and $\text{Sr}_x\text{Ba}_{1-x}\text{Nb}_2\text{O}_6$. ARL will perform electrical characterization and temperature-dependent pyroelectric measurements on ICB-provided functionalized BaTiO_3 thin films, and investigate the use of black Si nanopillar structural layers for enhanced IR absorption.

6. Metrics for Year 2 Quarter 1

1. W. L. Sarney, J. W. Little, F. E. Livingston, K. Niesz, D. E. Morse, and M. W. Cole, Low temperature growth and laser-induced phase transformation of BaTiO_3 films for uncooled IR detector applications, poster accepted for presentation at the 2009 Materials Research Society (MRS) Meeting, Boston, MA, Nov. 30–Dec. 4.
2. F. E. Livingston, W. L. Sarney, K. Niesz, and D. E. Morse, “Laser-induced structuring of bio-inspired nanomaterials for sensor technology applications,” accepted for presentation as an invited talk at the 2010 Military Sensing Symposia (MSS), Materials/Detectors Joint Session: Uncooled IR Detector and FPA Technology, Orlando, FL, Feb. 22–26.

7. References

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2. Zhang, M.-S.; Yin, Z.; Chen, Q.; Zhang, W.; Chen, W. *Solid St. Commun.* **2001**, *119*, 659.

List of Symbols, Abbreviations, and Acronyms

ARL	U.S. Army Research Laboratory
BaTiO ₃	barium titanium oxide
BST	barium strontium titanate
CCD	charge-coupled device
Cr	chromium
fs	femtosecond
FPA	focal plane array
ICB	Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies
IR	infrared
nm	nanometer
PbZrO ₃	lead zirconate
PbTiO ₃	lead titanate
SHG	second harmonic generation
Si	silicon
TiPt	titanium platinum
UV	ultraviolet
Y1Q4	year one, quarter four
Y2Q1	year two, quarter one
Y2Q2	year two, quarter two
Y1Q3	year one, quarter three

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TOTAL: 17 (1 ELEC, 1 CD, 15 HCS)

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